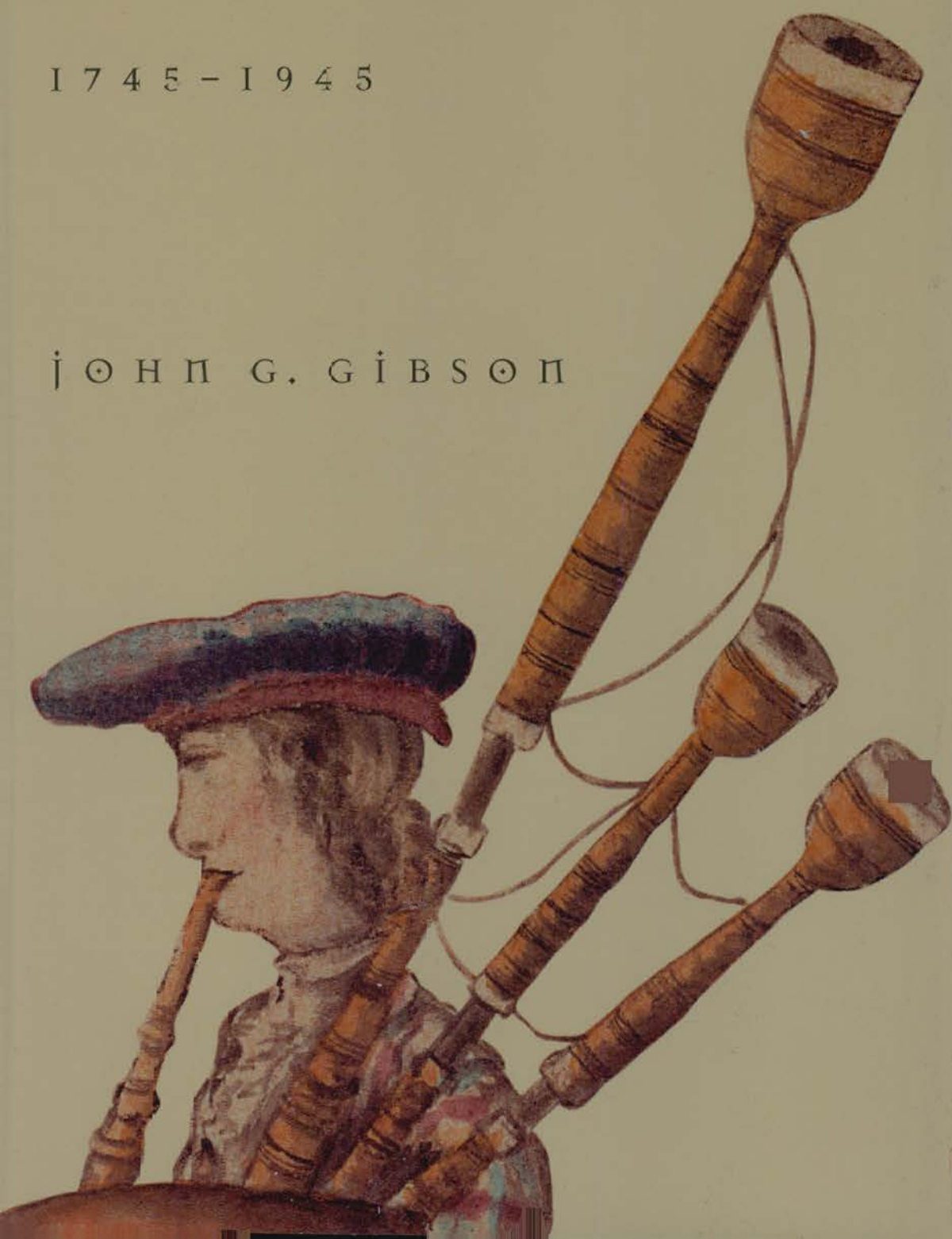


TRADITIONAL
GAELIC BAGPIPING

1745-1945

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A presentation to the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh for the degree of Ph.D. by research publications made by John G. Gibson, a matriculated doctoral student at the university and resident in Judique, Inverness county, Nova Scotia. The publication submitted to and accepted by the department of post-graduate studies is:

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I confirm that this work has not been submitted in full or in part for the award of another degree.

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Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 is a published historical and ethnographic study of the continuity, over two centuries, of an hitherto unrecognised and undiscovered style of community bagpiping which endured as an important musical integral in Scottish Gaelic-speaking communities in Nova Scotia from the immigrant years (1790-1840) until the late 20th century.

Although the style had just become extinct in Cape Breton in 1998, twenty years of field work clearly indicated the strength from those immigrant years of what in essence was Gaelic step-dance piping. This piping was by and large ear-learned and was shown to have been faithful to Scottish Gaelic tradition in an isolated and overlooked forest environment in the New World.

Study of the extensive Scottish written record exposed no contradiction to the contention that this Gaelic Cape Breton piping was the direct, largely unaltered lineal descendant of the bagpiping of the second half of the 18th century Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*. The Disarming Act (enforceable from 1748-1753 where arms were concerned) was shown to have had no explicitly or implicitly intended effect on traditional music of any kind. Study of the available legal record substantiated this. No longer could the act be proffered as an explanation for modern piping's now obvious deviation from the Gaelic source of almost all Scottish bagpiping tradition.

The essential link between music and dance, in this case highland step-dance, is the key to understanding this subject and here, again, with the proven, unbroken continuance of step-dancing (individually and in four and eight-hand reels, and in other tune-specific dances) from immigrant times in Gaelic Nova Scotia to the present, another hitherto undiscovered element of late 18th century Gaelic Scottish folk-life is exposed for the first time.

The work explores, also for the first time, the many received ideas about the origins of the piping and dancing traditions common in the twentieth century piping thought in Scotland. These are shown often to have been convenient misinterpretations used and re-used to bolster the belief that modern, literately learned, competition-oriented bagpiping was as faithful as possible to Gaelic tradition. Thus, along with other recent studies of the folk culture of Gaelic Nova Scotia, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945* re-emphasises the signal importance of New World Gaelic cultural affairs to the broader subject of Gaelic Scotland.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 is an historical study of the importance of the community bagpiping found, in the last stages of its natural existence, in rural Scottish Gaelic-speaking communities in Cape Breton until the middle of the twentieth century.

The work explores the roots of the phenomenon in the second half of the eighteenth century in Highland Scotland when people learned to play the instrument by ear and played for typically Gaelic functions at all levels of Gaelic society. It proceeds to defend the proposition that this pre-literate form lasted longest, least touched by outside changes, and latterly uniquely, in the New World Gàidhealtachd in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia while the Old World form had undergone radical change by the early twentieth century.

Anyone who had read just the tourist and observer literature of Gaelic Scotland over the period 1725-1820 knew that bagpipers were common almost everywhere. After 1746, instances of this recorded presence openly contradict the commonly-held nineteenth and twentieth century misapprehension, stated and re-stated by influential pipers, and others, in published works (in English), that the Disarming Act of 1746 dealt a near death blow to all Gaelic bagpiping.

A fact of great importance to this study is that there was no post-Culloden Hanoverian government policy against the Highland bagpipe. Traditional, ear-learned piping, which was for the most part dance-music piping, continued in Gaelic Scotland to be an almost ubiquitously popular phenomenon throughout the eighteenth century and almost certainly deep into the nineteenth. However, in Scotland, it disappeared without studious attention and description. This

same form (perhaps forms) was taken to the New World in the emigration decades (1770-1840) where it enjoyed the same popularity. Traditional bagpiping and traditional Gaelic dancing were popular from the beginning in the Gaelic-speaking colonies in Maritime Canada.¹ There the two intimately-linked phenomena lasted longest where Gaelic lasted longest, in rural Cape Breton.

The settlement period for Scots Gaels in Cape Breton is roughly from 1790-1840. Largely left to their own cultural devices traditional Gaelic bagpiping, and dancing, have typically proved more durable and conservative in Cape Breton than anywhere.²

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 establishes this early continuity of traditional piping, and dancing, from the Old to the New World. It proceeds to consider all imaginable forces for change in traditional piping in Cape Breton, especially in rural communities which were the most conservative of Gaelic traditions. This two-fold approach effectively precludes any argument that what may now appear to be unique about the older Gaelic traditional piping was evolved or invented or otherwise commandeered from others by Gaelic Scots in Cape Breton.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONAL DANCE TO THE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL BAGPIPING

Running through this study is the theme of linkage between traditional ear-learned bagpiping and traditional Gaelic Reel and individual step-dancing. Much survived in Scotland over the period, 1745-1840, certainly what are often called Highland Reels.³ It was obvious too that Gaels there took a remarkable pleasure in dancing to the bagpipe (as well as to the fiddle) with the most

widespread and popular group dances being the Four and the Eight-hand Reels.⁴ For the purpose of this study I confined myself to dealing with the dancing that I found in Gaelic Cape Breton. I have not explored the subject of what the Gaelic dancing-masters in Cape Breton taught or the tune-specific dances discussed by Frank Rhodes in the Fletts' *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*.⁵

Those who had thought and read broadly about piping, but who were unaware of, or had not studied and understood, the cultural anachronisms in the Nova Scotian Gaelic-speaking communities in Cape Breton, would have to have admitted, by 1950, that nothing was known of the speed and timing of the Reel dance-music or of the setting steps used by the Gaels who loved to dance individually to strathspey and/or reel timing, from 1745-1840. Any memories of those anachronisms in Gaelic Scotland that may have existed went unexplored or are lost.⁶

One major importance of *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945* is that, for the first time it demonstrates that a great deal is known about both from the last New World Gàidhealtachd in Cape Breton. Thus, a large part of the gap in our knowledge of popular Highland bagpiping and dancing to strathspey and reel timings is plausibly filled from recourse to an almost uninterrupted and very conservative Highland tradition overseas.⁷ Another importance is that this intimate link between music and dance allowed the researcher confidently to assume the speed and timing of the music being played, on whatever instrument (or sung), if he or she knew that the dancing involved traditional Scottish Gaelic step-dancing to reel and strathspey timings. Long-dead, unrecorded pipers who were remembered playing for Scotch Fours (Four-hand Reels) or for individual step-dancers were, by virtue of the intimacy of the music-dance link, traditional Gaelic bagpipers.

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 also exposes unfounded inaccuracies foisted

upon an ignorant piping public by influential proponents of the matured version of the modern school of piping thought. What, for example, the author coined the “exclusivity theory,” a belief dating to the early nineteenth century that states that the top, hereditary pipers (the MacCrimmons, the Rankins, the MacKays and the MacArthurs for example) eschewed the playing of any other pipe music than the variational, classical form is shown to be hoary but groundless and misleading. The idea appears to have begun as an outgrowth of the Highland Society of London’s policy only to promote classical bagpiping in its 1781 (-1838) competitions.⁸

COMMON STOCK, TWO BRANCHES

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 is thus also unique in offering a thorough-going and scholarly challenge to the commonly-held idea that modern, literately-learned bagpiping is the sole direct lineal descendant of the original, pre-Disarming Act Highland piping, and by any and all piping standards, the acme of the art. Two strains of Highland piping are now delineated for the first time, the modern and the traditional. They share a common Highland Scottish origin. Immediately recognizable is the polished modern Scottish form now found world-wide in both its classical and light music categories (the latter often inventively presented in [unGaelic] pipe and drum groupings). Less well known is the older and strongly traditionally Scottish Gaelic form which, for societal reasons in the chiefless New World Gàidhealtachd, let the classical form drop in the immigrant generations.⁹ Quite different criteria are required to make assessments of each form.

THE DISARMING ACT THEORY AND ITS MODERN DEFENDERS

The modernists' published point of view concerning their claim to represent the only direct lineal piping descendant of all that remained of piping is shown in *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945* not only to have been incorrect but to have been presented in varying degrees of unscholarliness.¹⁰ However, central to the position has been the misconception, mentioned above, that the Disarming Act of 1746¹¹ caused a radical and irreparable break in the line of Gaelic piping tradition.

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 places in perspective, for the first time, the real, and specifically limited impact of the Disarming Act. It also examines the history of the notion that this break in Highland piping tradition occurred. The latter examination begins with its appearance in c. 1822 in Donald MacDonald's *A Collection of Ancient Martial Music* and ends with the influential published opinions of Archibald Campbell of Kilberry (1969), Seumas MacNeill (1974) and Francis Collinson (1975).

MacNeill's view was the least open to what was at the time becoming obvious, that not all had been destroyed, of both the classical and the dance-music branches of Gaelic bagpiping. Campbell questioned the belief that a musical instrument had ever fallen into the category of "arms and warlike weapons" but subscribed to the subordinate idea that the bagpipes had been "heavily discouraged" by the Disarming Act.¹² Francis Collinson, when faced with the growing knowledge that neither classical nor dance-music piping had been expunged by any Hanoverian act of parliament or by any indirectly caused epidemic of Gaelic cultural distress, sought ways to explain these cultural leaks.

He assumed that, at the time of Culloden (1746), there were two distinct types of Highland bagpipes, the great and the small. He assumed also that the Disarming Act only sought, admittedly tacitly, to ban the great. Collinson claimed that regular and fencible soldiers as well as cattle drovers were exceptions to the Disarming Act and claimed that, since they would obviously only have played the great bagpipe, the classical form had survived through them. With even greater imaginative ingenuity he accounted for the survival of non-classical piping by recourse to an obscure [specious and equally unneeded] theory that a small-pipe had been used by Gaels exclusively as a dance-music instrument and that it had not been the object of Hanoverian prohibition in the Disarming Act.¹³

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 considers the origins of the small-pipe theory carefully in light of contradictory facts. Inasmuch as the idea still has some currency, the book discounts the idea at the same time as drawing attention to the ingenious extent to which the modernists' incorrect position was defended.¹⁴

REFUTATIONS OF THE MODERNISTS' CULTURAL BREAK THEORY, AND THE ORIGINS OF MODERN LITERATE PIPING

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 examines the Disarming Act and its prosecution in Gaelic Scotland carefully and shows that it was not intended to influence Gaelic bagpiping and did not. (The Act of 1746 and an excerpt from its mitigating amendment of 1748 are included as appendices to the book). The basis for the modernists' idea that the bagpipe was a weapon of war

is placed where it belongs, in the statement of an English judge at the treason trial of James Reid at York in 1746.¹⁵ Lowland Jacobite Reid's trial, and the fact that he was hanged as a traitor, had no bearing upon the Disarming Act as the study shows. Traditional piping continued unimpaired.

On the other hand, modern piping, based on literate learning and depending to a considerable extent upon competition for its inspiration, certainly represents a significant deviation from Gaelic tradition. What is also obvious is that its roots do not lie in the Disarming Act years (1748-53) but later. The book briefly examines the forces for adaptation and redirection of tradition. The first involves the late eighteenth century phenomenon of "improvement" as it touched Gaelic Scotland in the form of annual classical piping competitions held in Lowland urban Scotland from 1781.¹⁶ In the first three decades of the nineteenth century the Highland Societies of London and Edinburgh turned from tradition in their annual classical piping competitions. In 1804 they began to foster literate learning by offering Joseph MacDonald's book as incentive to those who had made "the greatest improvement."¹⁷ In 1808 they began to offer money to people who tried to write pipe music. Only the three-drone instrument was permitted in competition, setting a standard which remains unchanged.

The event had the *imprimatur* of the landed and other gentry. Its business was conducted almost completely in English and the votaries of improvement have left a wide and easily-accessible trail in the historical record which the unself-conscious exponents of the older, subtler and spontaneous Gaelic tradition have never sought to match (the subject will be treated below in a research method section).

The book argues however that the remarkably successful emergence of modern piping was in large part due to the great extent of the family and community emigrations of Gaels from

roughly 1770-1840. Economic “improvement” lay at the heart of these emigrations. Their cultural effect was to weaken the capacity of remaining subordinated Gaelic traditional culture to resist outside practices and standards.¹⁸

Modern literately-learned piping owes, in unassessable degrees, its particular brilliance then to the various artifices of those who sought to improve. These included many argumentative nineteenth century neo-Highlanders (even, latterly, some *bona fide* Gaels) as well as compilers of collections of bagpipe music. A recent study by William Donaldson explores the subject and the contests involved among those who improved, particularly where classical piping is concerned.¹⁹

Knowledge of the remnants of the older Gaelic pre-literate piping tradition depends on the traditional Gaelic piping-for-dancing anachronism discovered by the writer in what was accessible to him of the last New World Gàidhealtachd from 1972-98. This more Gaelic branch of piping was not infiltrated by ideas of improvement in Nova Scotia until about the time of the Great War and even into the 1960s it continued in the persons of a few last exponents (Alex Currie, perhaps the last of all, died at French Vale in 1997). Had the research in Cape Breton begun in 2002 instead of thirty years earlier very much less data would have been available to any researcher.

THE CONTINUANCE OF BAGPIPING IN GAELIC SCOTLAND 1746-1782

With the certain knowledge that the Disarming Act had no effect on piping in any legally recognised bounds (shire or counties) in Gaelic Scotland from 1746-1782, *Traditional Gaelic*

Bagpiping 1745-1945 eschews a lengthy collating of data to make the case for continuance.²⁰

After all, Inverness and Sutherland were Gaelic shires where the letter of the de-weaponing law ran and it is common knowledge that the MacCrimmons and MacArthurs, *inter alia*, went on piping in Skye (Inverness-shire). Many other pipers, including Joseph MacDonald, the minister's son, continued to play the bagpipes in Sutherland during those years.²¹ The text deals with the observances of *inter alia* Tobias Smollett, Boswell and Johnson, and Pennant simply to emphasize the obvious.

The study hints at the ironies implicit in the ease of the overlooking of contradictions by those who clove to the modernists' theory. On the one hand Angus MacKay's description (1838) of the prime piping families forms a convenient part of the skein of fascination with honoured piping families (including the MacCrimmons, the Rankins, the MacArthurs, the MacIntyres and the MacKays of Gairloch, all of whom had prominent and actively piping representatives flourishing during the period in question).²² On the other hand, many modern pipers are aware that MacKay's text is in some respects of questionable value and of shared, but unknown, authorship, but they have resort to the parts that are nostalgically appealing nonetheless.²³

The text does explore at length the piping in four Highland regiments, the Black Watch (embodied as a regiment of the line in 1739), Fraser's Highlanders (1757), Montgomerie's Highlanders (1757) and the Seaforth Highlanders (1778). All had one or two pipers per company. Initially their presence was at the wishes of the commanding officer; after that, pipers were maintained at the expense of the company captains and were not officially soldiers, a fact that Collinson did not discover.

Firstly, in Fraser's and Montgomerie's Highlanders sixty pipers in all served (not

counting unspecified pipers who were raised as soldiers). None were trained at army expense. Nothing is known of the part, if any, the dying MacCrimmon and Rankin piping colleges had in training army pipers. It is apparent however that these institutions closed in response to the withering of a traditional Gaelic need. All of the pipers either learned or maintained their piping skills during the period 1746-57. In the case of Fraser's Highlanders these pipers not only were from a Jacobite clan but one whose lands lay within easy marching distance of Fort George in Inverness (and thus easily policeable).

In the realm of the more formal teaching of an as-yet-undefined part of the Gaelic traditional piping repertoire, the shift from tradition is complicated.²⁴ The MacCrimmon and Rankin schools were defunct by c. 1770 (although, as noted above, the remaining pipers continued to play) but already a MacGregor family of pipers in Perthshire had adapted to the fighting Gaels' subsumption in the Hanoverian military by training pipers for the new Highland regiments.²⁵

The MacGregors took advantage of the classical piping competitions the Highland Societies of London and Glasgow held in Falkirk and Edinburgh as no other Gaelic-speaking extended family group did. Between 1781 and 1813 they enjoyed unequalled success.²⁶ However, until 1804 (when Joseph MacDonald's *Compleat Theory of the Great Highland Bagpipe* was offered as incentive to the most improved pipers) there is no evidence to allow anyone to state that anything other than ear-learned, traditional bagpiping was being played at these competitions. After 1813, by which time financial incentives had been offered to people to write down pipe music, the MacGregors fade from the competition list of successes. Thus their contribution appears to be to traditional piping; only their motive was untraditional.²⁷

TRADITIONAL GAELIC BAGPIPING IN THE NEW WORLD GAIDHEALTACHD

From study of the written record it is established then that there was no radical break in pre-literate piping tradition in the most Gaelic parts of Scotland over the years 1740-1840. While the Lowland classical piping competitions in Edinburgh from 1800-1838 continued through the decades of intensest emigration of Gaels from the Hebridean and West Highlands to Cape Breton, the competitions were a peripheral phenomenon that did not influence emigrating tradition bearers at all.²⁸

The ideas of piping competition and competition before a Lowland urban audience itself were sufficiently alien to Gaelic sensitivities and tradition that hardly any of the top Gaelic pipers (the MacCrimmons, the MacArthurs *et al*) deigned to take part; their decision cannot have gone unnoticed. Neither did many of the Gaelic community pipers in the more distant parts of the Gàidhealtachd compete. It is however fair to emphasise that, as Lowland interest in classical bagpiping flagged during and after the Regency, the competition organisers more and more diverged from tradition. The appeal of a modernising bagpiping then was to the piper who was as ready to desert or manipulate tradition to his purposes as the competition organisers²⁹.

Research in the written record in Cape Breton indicates that traditional pipers were numerous among the immigrants (1790-1840). Their numbers increase markedly when verbal and unpublished family histories are consulted. The bagpipes, perhaps more than the fiddle, were a very popular expression of Gaelic Scottishness in Cape Breton. Incontrovertibly, pipers brought the old Gaelic strain, or strains, of both forms of Gaelic bagpiping (classical and dance-music) with them to the New World.

The social position of immigrant traditions Gaelic pipers, relying on Scottish standards, shows a cross-section from representatives of the tacksman and officer class (Lt Donald McCrumen) and prominent tenant farmers (Red John MacKay) through people like Kenneth Chisholm (piper to the Chisholm chief) and John “*Brathaich*” MacGillivray (piper to Alexander MacDonald of Glenaladale in Moidart) to uncounted ordinary community pipers unknown to the Scottish written record. The ear-learned classical music that the once-patronised brought to Nova Scotia appears seldom to have outlasted the immigrant generations although at least one late reference exists in Upper Margaree, Cape Breton that suggests that a *sine qua non* for the best local pipers was the playing of “A’ Ghlas Mheur” (“The Finger Lock”), a piece of classical pipe music.³⁰

What most obviously distinguishes traditional bagpiping modern bagpiping are the speed and rhythms used in the playing of strathspey and reel timings. Traditional Gaelic strathspey timing for step-dancing is the faster of two clearly identified Cape Breton strathspey timings, strathspey and slow strathspey. It is was once called in Scotland the strathspey reel.³¹ The speed of the Gaelic step-dance reel is faster than most modern competition piping’s reel but is distinct in its balanced four-beats-per-bar rhythm. Perhaps no less apparently distinguishing of traditional Gaelic musicians is the remarkably extensive repertoires they have at their disposal.

The criteria for assessment of local Cape Breton pipers by my informants were, with several exceptions, based on the musician’s ability to produce good-sounding step-dance music. This meant dedication to the correct rhythms and speeds of strathspeys and reels and also, for at the least the first figure of the Square Set (since c. 1890), of jigs. This also meant a repertoire of hundreds of tunes of each type. Those were the primary criteria of assessment with subtlety of

understandings being rare extended impositions. Variations in fingering were generally unconsidered.

In this there was little generally to distinguish assessment of fiddlers and pipers and indeed many informants backed up their opinion of a traditional piper with the statement that the piper was equally good as a fiddler.³² Few informants were admitted pipers. Two sensitive assessments of the step-dance piping of Allan MacFarlane indicated, however, that he had fingering and drone tuning abilities on a par with the modern immigrant, itinerating piper Andrew (Sandy) Ross Boyd (1907-82), one of John MacColl's pupils.³³

Of interest to the researcher was the knowledge that the *seanachaidh* Joe Neil MacNeil, a knowledgeable piping enthusiast who loved and studied the music, the repertoire, and the fingering of his neighbour and friend Neil R. MacIsaac from East Bay, knew nothing about Allan MacFarlane or any other of the Inverness county pipers about whom the author wrote. This limited, localised knowledge and appreciation of pipers and other musicians underlined the exceptional nature of the various published, Scottish adulatory assessments of pipers and piping families in Gaelic Scotland, by English-speaking Scots. The Gairloch MacKay pipers, father and son Red John and Angus, were untouched by any such fame in Gaelic Nova Scotia. Lt Donald McCrumen, the veteran of Banastre Tarleton's British Legion, left no musical trace in Shelburne.

THE STUDY OF TRADITION'S SURVIVAL IN CAPE BRETON

Since what is known from the many published Scottish, English, and European sources about traditional Gaelic bagpiping for traditional dancing in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd from 1745-

1845 is seldom more than observers' casual and undeveloped remarkings,³⁴ the study then considers fidelity to tradition in Cape Breton (1790-1945). It examines at length and in detail that is often new, what grounds there are for the author's claim that the last traditional, ear-learned pipers piping for step-dancing in rural Cape Breton until the mid-twentieth century indeed represented "an uninterrupted and very conservative Gaelic tradition." Had any changes occurred in piping over the century and a half, two lifetimes, that Gaelic community life had existed in Cape Breton?

The question is approached in several ways:- the exposure to, and the influences of, outside modernising cultural forces in the last New World Gàidhealtachd in Cape Breton from 1790 till 1918, the impetus for change from outside forces after the Great War, and the forces promoting Gaelic tradition in rural Gaelic Cape Breton until 1945.

This work demonstrates that until the passing away of the last immigrant Gaels in the 1880s, while there was a strong consciousness of being a Scottish Gaelic part of the British empire (although isolated and largely ignored), there was almost no enlistment in British military services before Canadian Confederation (1867) and very little contact between Gaelic Canadian military and the British forces until the Great War. Traditional music continued to be ear-learned³⁵ with the primary purpose of providing music for traditional step-dancing, individually and in Reels.³⁶

A novel point made in *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945* is that the Gaelic middle class in Cape Breton had a positive influence on the maintenance of conservative Gaelic tradition. There was a presence of army officers, substantial tenant farmers, merchants and clergy among the largely family and community emigrations to Nova Scotia. There is no record of these

people's disdaining of tradition wherever they settled, rather the reverse. One of the Tulloch MacDonalds from Lochaber, for example, ran a dancing school that taught traditional step-dancing steps at *Beinn Bhiorach*, north of Mabou in immigrant times. Literate and bilingual school teachers like D.D. MacFarlane, the brothers John and Malcolm MacLellan (sons of a Scottish army captain and protégés of Lord Selkirk), Malcolm Gillis all lived strongly within Gaelic tradition. The book notes the difficulty in identifying the middle class where there was freehold land granting and where there were apparently no social distinctions of Gaelic accent. The part played by the Roman Catholic clergy appears to take up this sponsoring of traditional culture when the increasingly bilingual middle class leave off, at the turn of the twentieth century.

There were no piping competitions in Gaelic Nova Scotia, outside the improver-oriented Highland games. There was no piping myth. There was no concept of "hereditary" pipers worthy of adulation, although several pipers who had enjoyed status and preferment in Scotland settled in Nova Scotia. In the New World they settled, at best, into local reputation and occasional newspaper mention. However community pipers were ubiquitous and greatly appreciated in the Nova Scotia Gàidhealtachd.³⁷

Highland games, which began in the 1860s in Nova Scotia and included essentially non-traditional display elements like competition in piping and dancing *inter alia*, also had only a peripheral influence on the Gaelic rural population. *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945* in fact exposes the resorting by two games organisers to include tradition as part of the competition, in response to either the absence of competitors who knew the dances, or in deference to the obvious strength of genuine Highland tradition, or both.³⁸

Although the book could not stray into any profound exploration of the significance of the emergence of widespread Nova Scotia Gaelic-English bilingualism in relationship either to the Education Act in Scotland (1872) which banished Gaelic from the Highland Scottish classroom, or to rapidly growing contact with the “Boston states” and other cities in the American north-east (in and from the 1880s), it describes the only important cultural intrusion at the community level on Cape Breton, as well as Nova Scotian, Highland tradition from the immigrant decades until 1945. The outside modernising cultural force in the last New World Gàidhealtachd in Cape Breton was the introduction of the French four-couple dance, the Quadrille, into a world where there were two dominant Scottish Highland group dances, the Eight- and the Four-hand Reels.³⁹

Although after the second world war the Quadrille (known in Cape Breton as the Square Set) was Gaelicised to include step-dance setting steps, until about 1945 it did not contain them; its popular appeal was that it was easier to dance for those who could not or would not step-dance. It was the first group dance embraced by Cape Breton Gaels to be “called” and the caller invariably called in English. The music for the Square Set (and the various variant Lancers) was played by traditional, ear-learned bagpipers and fiddlers with no reported need for any adaptation except that the Square Set used jig and reel timing, and excluded the strathspey.⁴⁰ The travelling steps of the Square Set included a chain and so partially resembled the old Scotch Eight-hand Reel.

Inasmuch as the rapid rise in popularity of the Square Set coincided with the emergence of bilingual Cape Breton Gaels into North America, with the strongest connections being with the greater Boston area, it appears that the disappearance by c. 1920 of the old “Wild Eight” may not be dissociated from the Square Set’s rise.⁴¹

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 considers the influence of the Square Set on step-dancing and the music required by Scotch step-dancers. It also traces the keenness in the most Gaelic of parts of rural Cape Breton for the old beloved Scotch Four and examines that as an important integral to the matrimonial rite and to Gaelic picnics and céilidhs until the time of the second world war.⁴²

Although the four Gaelic bagpipers chosen, from many, for inclusion in the book were as resolutely traditional in the Scotch Gaelic sense as possible, their choice was made in order to make the point most clearly that the Square Set had negligible influence on traditional Gaelic music.⁴³ All four pipers played for the Scotch Four, two having become pipers before 1875 before the advent of the Square Set. Almost certainly those two, and perhaps one more, piped also for the Eight, although I elicited no such freely-proffered admission that I knew as reliable from any of my informants.⁴⁴ All four piped for many individual step-dancers in all sorts of *milieux*. They all also piped for the Square Set.

In an admission of the fiddle's relatively recent displacement of the bagpipe as number one step-dance music instrument, two of the traditional bagpipers described in detail in *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945* were also excellent fiddlers. The phenomenon of piper-fiddler was common in Gaelic Cape Breton and has a few little-remembered, unappreciated precedents in the Scottish Highlands. Two instruments, one music. Two centuries, and more, and no obvious, fundamental cultural change.

Step-dancing remains popular in Cape Breton, and has spread from Cape Breton to Hebridean Scotland as has traditional Gaelic-style step-dance piping. The music today in Cape Breton is played mostly by non-Gaelic speaking fiddlers who are musically literate.⁴⁵ The last

traditional piper, Alex Currie, is dead, but traditional piping is now the fascination of a growing number of neo-traditionalist pipers, people like Paul MacNeil, Jamie MacInnis, Barry Shears and John MacLean in Nova Scotia, and Andrew (Hamish) Moore and Fred Morrison in South Uist.

RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

(NB. Unless already mentioned in the above text the references below are not included in the following bibliography. They may be found in the book).

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 is the result of many years' research in two kinds of record sources, the written and the oral/memory. In Scotland the former predominated; in Nova Scotia (particularly in Cape Breton) the latter. The book's thirty-two page bibliography does not include a list of personal interviews that were conducted over a twenty year period in what remained to the author/researcher of the memories of the last Gaelic-speaking generations in Cape Breton. These interviews are recorded in the book's end-notes.

Correspondence with several people in Scotland, with one exception,⁴⁶ offered few novel insights into Gaelic piping history. Lore pertaining to the pre-literate, step-dance music bagpiper was apparently dead. With the exceptions of the work of the Fletts (J.F. and T.M.) I found little novel, Gaelic-oriented, scholarship on piping for dancing in eighteenth century Scotland. This forced my dependence on the original forms of those published materials available that yielded data dealing with piping and piping for dancing in Gaelic Scotland in the century 1745-1845. Later published versions, if altered or added to, might contain retrospective imposures of ideas. (I

referred, for example, to Joseph Macdonald's hand-written MS "Compleat theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe...", {c. 1760} over the various published editions {1803, 1927, and 1972}, and to the latter to show later additions and distortion).

(1) The written record

Apart from a long list of published secondary texts used in creating, confirming and if necessary reconfirming background information, I used all available published material, prose and poetry, in English, Gaelic and French, in which there were contemporary records of piping, and piping for dancing, in Gaelic Scotland over the century in question (1745-1845). Added to that largely unscholarly but rich and varied source I drew attention to the Gaelic poetry of men such as Alasdair MacDonald (*Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair*), Duncan Ban MacIntyre (*Donnchadh Bàn Mac an-t Saoir*), John MacCodrum, Rob Donn MacKay, John MacPherson of Strathmashie (*Iain mac Theàrlaich Oig*), and John Roy Stewart. All were pro-Gaelic and vituperative if occasion demanded. Three, MacDonald, MacPherson, and Stewart, were Jacobites. None condemned the Disarming Act as prohibitor of the bagpipe. I found and relied on primary sources that had not been used before in order to confirm the obvious case that piping for dancing in Gaelic Scotland was commonplace in the period mentioned. Those new primary sources built even more persuasively on that case.

Concerning the written record in Scotland, published and unpublished (primary and secondary), I had access to the Conan House archives in Gairloch, Ross-shire, which contain family and estate records of the MacKenzies of Gairloch. I had access also to the Edinburgh

University library holdings, including the Angus Fraser MSS and Joseph MacDonald's MS mentioned above (from the Laing MSS). In Edinburgh also I used material from the National Library of Scotland; letters from J.F. Campbell, from John Johnston, Coll to the *Oban Times* and to Seton Gordon; the Campbell of Mamore papers, Seton Gordon's papers, the Sutherland Estate papers; various piping MSS, including Donald MacDonald's, Colin Campbell's, and Angus MacKay's.

From the Scottish military archives I relied on three sources, the Black Watch's, the Royal Highland Fusiliers' and the Sutherland Highlanders'. Access in the Scottish Record Office was also extensive. Among those documents consulted with the Scottish Justiciary Court records, Register of Criminal Letters (1751-80), Decrees of Removing, ships' passenger lists, researches concerning the Gordon ducal family, the memorial of Mungo Campbell, and letters.

Other British archival sources were the British Museum manuscript materials including the Egerton MSS. The Public Record Office provided British Military and Naval Records, War Office records, Colonial Office material (English Records and Treasury documents pertaining to North Carolina). The library at the House of Commons furnished the Disarming Act (1746) and its Amendment (1748). I also had access to archival material held at Edinburgh Castle (now NMS).

Canadian archival material used includes the "Journals of James Thompson Senior," a sergeant from Easter Ross in the first Fraser's Highlanders (78th/1757) who remained in Quebec. His papers are held by *Les Archives Nationales du Québec*, Quebec City, and add uniquely to knowledge of military pipers serving in Fraser's Highlanders in the mid-eighteenth century, and by extension to other Highland regiments. I had access also to an anonymous document called

“John MacKay...The Blind Piper of Gairloch” which is part of the Archibald MacMechan Papers lodged at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS. Census material for Nova Scotia, “The John George Marshall Papers,” and “Reminiscences of a Long Life” [the reminiscences of John MacKay JP, New Glasgow, son of Red John MacKay], among other documents, were provided by the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS). The unpublished diaries of D.D. MacFarlane, South West Margaree (now sequestered by episcopal order), were made available by the archivist at St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS, and Special Collections at that institution was also a source of much published, first edition Scottish Gaelic poetry as well as a complete collection of the Scots Magazine.

The author consulted local, county and provincial histories of Maritime Canada, some scholarly, more not. Also consulted were reminiscences, travel books and local genealogical histories, unpublished family histories, and census and land grant data held by PANS and Eastern Counties Regional Library, Mulgrave, NS.

Notably valuable and irreplaceable among personal correspondences are letters to the author from James Laidlaw (then the last living member of the Stonehouse pipe-band, winner of the first world pipe-band competition in 1909),⁴⁷ and from the piper and Gael, George Moss (1903-1990), Kessock, by Inverness. Moss clung tenaciously to a different style of classical bagpiping and retained an open mind to the author’s unusual approach to the study of the history of community bagpiping. Correspondences with archivists and librarians in Scotland, Canada, and the United States led to the finding of useful primary source materials. Jesse R. Lankford, assistant state archivist at Raleigh, North Carolina, for example, drew my attention to a handwritten, eye-witness report on the battle of Widow Moore’s Creek Bridge (1776) held by the

Public Record Office at Kew.

(2) The oral record

The central claim of *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945*, that the last Cape Breton Gaelic traditional bagpipers in the mid-twentieth century (and the step-dancers they played for) were the bearers of latter-day, preserved and conservative facsimiles of hitherto unknown eighteenth century Scottish Gaelic cultural phenomena, brought by the immigrants to Cape Breton, depends more, however, on countless interviews with the last of the Gaelic-speaking generations in Cape Breton as well as with their bilingual and unilingual (English) descendants.

Traditional Gaelic music and dance survived vigorously in Cape Breton in the 1970s although the fiddle had displaced the bagpipes and the last Gaelic-speaking generations were not only, generally, in their forties and fifties, but had deliberately withheld Gaelic from their children in favour of English. Nonetheless the older tradition bearers presented the author with an amazing vein of reminiscences about pipers and piping. There were also enough informants to let me confirm data independently.

I sought the oldest Gaelic-speaking Nova Scotians to interview (in English) and was fortunate to meet a few in Cape Breton who were born in the late 1870s.⁴⁸ These people, if raised in remoter settlements, were exposed more certainly for longer, to the Scotch Four and non-organ or piano accompaniment to the fiddle, and more important, to the bagpipes. Some also (like Peggy “the Millar” MacIsaac, Judique, who had been a child in hinterland Glencoe, Cape Breton) claimed categorically to recollect dancing the Eight-hand Reel.⁴⁹ Informants were both Roman

Catholic and Protestant.

My informants also included seasonal returnees to Cape Breton from various places in North America, as well as Gaels who had spent varying long times employed in greater Boston, New York, and elsewhere in the United States and Canada, urban and rural, before resettling in Cape Breton. The latter's fond memories of traditional music and dance stood out clearly inasmuch as they could often more readily see change. I maintain a large collection of correspondence although tradition bearers' letters form only a small part of this. Most of my informants shared memories and knowledge in face-to-face interviews, sometimes subsequently over the telephone or by correspondence.

I chose not to tape-record because I did not wish to frighten, embarrass or inconvenience informants. I also wanted to develop my own memory. A fairly rapidly accumulating general knowledge of local history and custom allowed some subtlety in interviewing technique but of course was no more guarantee of objective results than being a Scotsman was. Whenever possible I directed or allowed personal conversations to develop in which I was offered information without my having presented leading questions. Then, only when certain that there would be no confusion or deliberate proffering of what the informant thought I wanted to know, did I feel that I might use shared terminology. For example, to avoid using the term "Scotch Four" I occasionally used the term "two-couple dance" if the subject had not been raised by the informant. That I often felt confusion at accepting the synonym "dancing" for "step-dancing," or that an informant was unconfused when using the term "Eight-hand Reel" (when there could be confusion with the reel figure of a Square Set), was a recurring problem of my fastidiousness.

I almost always took notes which I later transcribed. Verbatim citations were carefully

committed to memory and/or written in shorthand at the time. I learned by experience to weigh the risk of the informant's, or my, losing continuity and train of thought; informants ranged in type from the polished lore-bearer like Joe Neil MacNeil who could be interrupted, to shy, more sensitive or more deferential people with whom one could not indulge the desire to intrude, perhaps until a reliable, mutually understood bond was established, or perhaps never. The taking of photographs depended also on personal assessment of the interviewer-informant relationship. I preferred to err on the side of caution. I retain almost all of my initial notes.

An obvious shortcoming of this system was that information was sometimes freely offered whose value I was unable at the time to assess and appreciate (and so went unrecorded). Related to this, particularly in my early interviewing, was the difficulty of not having a sufficiently broad and deep subject perspective and thus not taking full advantage of a willing informant's knowledge with more questions.⁵⁰ Both shortcomings lessened with experience. For unknown reasons a few people preferred not to be interviewed, but, by and large I encountered a people who were pleased and surprised that their recollections were valued. My work commemorates them.

Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945 juxtaposes two techniques of information gathering, typically scholarly reliance on the available written record, and the use of many human memories, confirmed, wherever possible, by other memories, and by any available written (or carved) record. The reaction of academic readers in Scotland and Canada to the initial manuscript was simply that it was too long so it was greatly condensed and shortened. There was no bridle at the use of untaped personal interviews.

The work's purpose was to draw the attention of scholars to the continuance of an anachronistic traditional music, particularly in the Nova Scotia Gàidhealtachd but also in Gaelic Scotland for an unknowable length of time (presumably long into the nineteenth century in culturally conservative areas of Gaelic Scotland). The work sets out to present a Gaelic perspective on bagpiping and in doing so makes a number of cogent arguments which had not been made before. Among these are the argument for an extension of the time of middle class emigrations of Scots Gaels into the 1840s. Another draws attention to the wooing of tradition by ministers of the Church of Scotland in the "moderate" period c. 1750-1800) and on to the middle of the nineteenth century.

Inasmuch as both traditional Cape Breton Gaelic bagpiping and traditional Cape Breton Gaelic step-dancing have been taught in South Uist for some years, it appears to the author that his work on community bagpiping has had some effect. It also meshes in a satisfying way with recent thought about pre-modernised classical bagpiping. Both are freer than ever of crimpingly unthoughtful attitudes.

1. These include parts of north-eastern Nova Scotia. Cape Breton (a separate province until 1820), Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick (the Nashwaak Valley), and Newfoundland (in the Codroy Valley which was peopled from Nova Scotia in the 1840s).
2. The only element of Highland bagpiping which did all but disappear with the immigrants was the classical form known as *ceòl mòr* (great music) or “pibroch.” Its restoration by means of competition in Lowland towns was the sole objective of the piping improvers in Scotland and England, from 1781-1838.
3. Fletts, *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*, passim. Also, Fletts, “Some Early Highland Dancing competitions.”
4. Among those observers of Highlanders dancing is the Aberdeen dancing-master Francis Peacock whose *Sketches...* was published in 1805. I have used the term “Reel” to denote the group dance, and “reel” to describe one particular timing or sort of tune.
5. Rhodes, “Dancing in Cape Breton Island.”
6. Margaret Fay (Shaw) Campbell discovered no example of step-dancing in culturally conservative South Uist in the 1930s for example. Personal correspondence to the author.
7. The late Allan Bruford anticipated the gathering of material about Highland bagpiping in the second half of the eighteenth century and its grafting into a much more scholarly conception of the subject than existed when he wrote in 1983.
8. The Coll piper, John Johnston (1836-1921), a bilingual and literate Gaelic-speaking piper as well as a lover of an older style of classical bagpiping, vigorously defended the exclusivity theory despite proof to the contrary, in Joseph Macdonald’s MS, “Compleat theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe” and elsewhere.
9. Typical is the case of Angus MacKay. He was the older of two sons of the emigrant Red John MacKay all of whom settled in what is now Pictou county in 1805. Red John was the last of the family pipers to the Gairloch MacKenzies; Angus would have been next in line. Angus, a patrilineal great-grandson of the Blind Piper of Gairloch (John MacKay), quit classical piping in NS for want of an interested audience. He continued to play ordinary pipe music.
10. The frequent repetition of unchecked data exposes at best laziness, at worst, wilful manipulation in defence of modern *status quo* theorizing.
11. An Act for the more effectual disarming the Highlands in Scotland (Disarming Act), 19 Geo. 2, cap. 39, 1746.
12. Kilberry, *The Kilberry Book*, 7. Archibald Campbell chose only to remove the comma and the upper case from two letters of “Arms and warlike Weapons” as it appears in the Disarming Act. The phrase appears in the amendment first as “Arms or Warlike Weapons.”
13. Collinson, *The Bagpipe*, 166-7, 170, 172, 181. Collinson was at ease with his unsubstantiated claim that the Disarming Act, which he admitted made no mention of any musical instrument, was now interpreted as distinguishing between two related species of instrument, one of which, the small-pipe, he did not define.

14. Even had the Disarming Act tacitly banned the bagpipe (presumably as a warlike weapon and not as an item of clothing) the 1748 amendment to the Disarming Act allowed the bearing of "Arms or Warlike Weapons" to landowners in those "Counties" clearly specified in the Disarming Act to be disarmed. The greater the value of land held the more "Firelocks," "Pair of Pistols" and "Swords or Cutlasses" the owner could have for use "by himself, Family or Servants." (An Act to Amend). Note also that the amended act became law in 1748, the same year that the Disarming Act began to be enforced. By both acts the weapons clause ceased to be law on 27 September 1753.
15. The reader's attention is drawn to a possible precedent, namely the published view of Sir James Turner in 1683 that the bagpipe was considered by him to be an instrument of war. See, Turner, *Pallas Armata*, 219.
16. A more recent study confirming the influence of "improving" is Leslie Ellen Brown, "An Essay suggesting an important application of the Highland music Moral Sentiment and the Oeconomic Ode," in *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, vol. 6 (2001), pp. 317-32.
17. "Account of the competition of pipers" in Angus MacKay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, 17.
18. Almost none of the most prominent Gaelic pipers had anything to do with society competitions. Lt Donald MacCrumen (c. 1738-1825) chose not to educate any son or daughter as a piper. The last Rankin piper, Condullie (c. 1774-1852), living on Coll, quit piping, took a commission in the New Brunswick Fencibles in 1804 and settled in Prince Edward Island. No Gairloch MacKay piper competed, the last of them emigrating to Canada in 1805.
19. See, Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society 1750-1950*, (2000).
20. The absence of any remarking by any Jacobite Gael of distaste at the classification of the bagpipe as a weapon of war is mentioned below. In addition, the Justiciary court records for 1748-1751 (the first three years of prosecution of the anti-weapons clause) were consulted and show no pipers apprehended. The Hanoverian post reports never mention pipers either.
21. The anti-Highland garb clause of the original Disarming Act affected all of Scotland. This part of the act was not repealed until 1782, but by that time it had long been in desuetude, as the book proves.
22. James Logan's *The Scottish Gaël* (1831) also promotes a number of "hereditary" piping families in Gaelic Scotland whose tenure clearly ran through the period 1746-1782. Logan had a profound influence on Angus MacKay's *Collection...* (1838). MacKay dedicated his work to the Highland Society of London of which Logan was secretary from 1835-38.
23. The exclusivity of repertoire theory falls in like manner. There is no shortage of acceptance of the Blind Piper of Gairloch as a pre-eminent classical music composer and piper. Until recently however, no comment has been made at the equally well-disseminated knowledge that he made reel tunes. No argument may now be made that he was of commoner stock than the MacCrimmons, for example. The author elsewhere has made the case for his descent from one of the Lords Reay. See, Gibson, "The Pedigree of the Blind Piper."
24. The assumption that the MacCrimmon and Rankin "colleges" only instructed already competent bagpipers and in the classical form is challenged by *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945* as unproven. The book shows that many prominent military pipers played dance music on the pipes from the Seven Years' War onward.
25. The MacGregor piping patriarch, John (1708-89), Fortingall, Prince Charles's piper, is said to have taught his four piping sons (b. 1725, 1740, 1748, and 1750) and ninety non-related others. Thus he taught from c.

1740 and his pupils probably included pipers for the Highland regiments in the Seven Years' War.

26. Between 1781 and 1813 a Perthshire MacGregor piper was absent from the prize lists (1st to 3rd until 1808; 1st to 5th from 1809) only on six occasions. They won 1st twelve times, 2nd seven, 3rd thirteen, and 4th twice (34 placings in all; 6 being more than one placing in the same year).
27. MacGregors appear to have had, for some years previous, support through the active presence in Scottish modern piping society of the clan's newly created chief, the Gaelic-speaking Sir John MacGregor Murray (discoverer in Bengal of Joseph Macdonald's "Compleat theory...).
28. The irony of the competitions is that, in their first two decades (1781-1801), they offer confirming evidence that many of the prominent, chief's and chieftain's pipers played both traditional Gaelic, ear-learned classical pipe music in competition, as well as dance-music piping for exhibitions of either (group) Reel or (individual) dancing to reels. In fact the competitions relied, for their first twenty years, perhaps longer, uncritically, on that very tradition they would later have a hand in discouraging and dislocating.
29. What was emerging was a system of competition which offered entry for job- and money-conscious pipers to a growing commercial market for their services. Opportunities existed in the army, in the homes of gentry, and with official institutions like the Highland societies.
30. Allan MacFarlane (*Allachan Aonghuis Dhuibh*) (1878-1938) aspired to play "The Finger Lock" but how this aspiration reached him is unknown. MacFarlane was uneducated and almost unilingual but in nearby South West Margaree there were two educated school teachers, Malcolm Gillis and D.D. MacFarlane, who might have passed on an outside idea.
31. The modern Scottish piper's strathspey is slower and differently rhythmically accented.
32. The readiness of informants to fall back on a piping-fiddling comparison presumed the author's obviously traditional taste in fiddling which was early established purposefully in most interviews. It also acknowledged his greater understanding of modern technique in piping. Often the interviewer sensed informants' initial caution to discuss pipers' technical abilities for fear of adverse comparisons with modern pipers'. One richly traditional, and highly appreciated Gaelic step-dance fiddler played with the use of only three fingers on the finger-board.
33. Mary Gillis, daughter-in-law of the Margaree teacher/bard Malcolm Gillis, and Clarence Moore, East Lake Ainslie, teacher, both Gaels. Visiting Scottish piping judges, adjudicating a Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island piping competition in 1895, gave the first prize to the earliest-born of the pipers described in *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping 1745-1945*, Archibald Beaton (c.1840-c.1925).
34. Colonel Thornton's description of the dancing he saw and heard at Dalmally (Argyllshire) in the 1800s hints strongly at tapping of the dancers' feet, akin to Cape Breton step-dancing. Another observation in 1817 of dancers performing at the Highland Society classical piping competition in Edinburgh refers to the "clattering noise produced [by the dancers' feet]..." This also has the ring of step-dancing. The latter citation is from Fletts, "Some Early Highland Dancing Competitions."
35. The author only found two books of pipe music that were published in nineteenth century Scotland in the hands of descendants of traditional Cape Breton bagpipers. They may or may not have been obtained before 1900.
36. Any predominance of the bagpipes over the fiddle, or vice versa, is unestablished. During the later nineteenth century the pump organ and then the piano were adopted as accompaniment for the fiddle but

traditional bagpipers remained common to almost all Cape Breton Gaelic-speaking communities and were well remembered by the author's informants.

37. The famous piper who emigrated from Loch Broom on the ship *Hector*, to what is now Pictou county, Nova Scotia, was enticed by the other passengers' offer of a free passage. It seems fair to suggest that leaders of community emigrations eagerly sought the company of traditional community dance musicians.
38. The reporting of many of the NS and PEI Highland games betrays the misconception that Gaels spoke a brand of Lowland English, adding, albeit inadvertently, to the fake aspect of the events, dutifully imported from Victorian Scotland, along with the necessary tartans and other gew-gaws.
39. The Quadrille was first danced in public in Scotland at Edinburgh c. 1816. The Cape Breton Four-hand Reel, also known as the Scotch Four, comprised in equal parts, strathspey and reel timings. It is inferrable from Francis Peacock's writing that strathspeys were long-established as part of certain Highland Reels in 1805. Peacock was born c. 1723 (see, Fletts, "Early Highland Dancing Competitions").
40. The case for the strong cleaving of Cape Breton Gaels to tradition was seen in the invention of step-dance step for the setting-step portion of the jig figure(s) of the Square Set. Individual step-dancing in the Cape Breton that the author discovered in 1972 was done almost exclusively to strathspey and reel timing. Although reel steps can be danced to clog and hornpipe timing, if played by a step-dance piper or fiddler, the timings are immediately recognised by a Scotch step-dancer as distinctive. Why there are no subtle jig steps in Scotch Gaelic step-dancing is undiscovered.
41. An instance of the Eight-hand Reel's being danced was discovered in the Hillsdale area of Inverness county in the late 1920s. The vivid memory of the old Gaelic-speaking informant was occasioned by his having been co-opted as a boy into dancing a dance he had never done before.
42. The Four was commonly danced at céilidhs and at public events long after the second world war. At summer picnics in Inverness county a separate stage was built to accommodate the Scotch Four. It was still often demanded by the strong traditional element attending dances for whom the terms "dancing" and "step-dancing" were, as they remain in Scotch Cape Breton, synonymous.
43. I collected only one freely-offered suggestion that the incoming Square Set might have had some effect. It was taken, in 1972, from a very traditional Gaelic-speaking (and Wedding Reel) fiddler from Upper Margaree, Angus Allan Gillis (1899-1977). He told me spontaneously that the father of his contemporary and friend, the Protestant Gaelic fiddler, Sandy MacLean from Foot Cape, had told them that the Square Set, in the 1900s, was leading to an increase in speed of reel playing. I have never found confirmation of this claim. NB. The Wedding Reel was always a Scotch Four.
44. I did not use any leading questions about the Eight-hand Reel since, I thought, even my oldest informants, those born in the late 1870s, might offer an uncertain, unassessable response out of possible confusion of the Reel with the Square Set. That unfortunate diffidence was mine. With the Scotch Four it was a different matter. The dance had been so common, and so immediately recognised by name that at times I did not scruple to lead with questions including "two-couple dance" or simply "Scotch Four."
45. There remains a small core of Gaelic-speaking fiddlers who are Cape Breton natives, Alex Francis MacKay, Fr Francis Cameron, Theresa and Donald MacLellan (sibs), among them.
46. One exception was Bridget MacKenzie, Dornoch, whose knowledge of the classical piping and the poetry of the Blind Piper of Gairloch was new.

47. Mr Laidlaw's name and address were given me by Addie Muir, the son of a fellow Stonehouse pipe-band piper, James Muir (1891-1976), who had emigrated to Cape Breton.
48. One informant, Allan Dan MacInnis, Glendale, who was interviewed at his home in 1976, was the son of a piper who had been born in Moidart and brought out by his parents as a child in the 1840s.
49. I met people who described, from their early school days, what was almost a craze for the new Square Set in the early years of the twentieth century. I met no-one however who remembered the introduction of the dance.
50. I missed learning valuable information about the organisation of the dance halls in Boston in the 1880s from an old Glendale lady because I was determined to try to find out what she knew of another subject. She had died in her nineties before I realised my folly.

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